



Photo by Rick McComb

## Teacher of the Year

Billie Travis, a mathematics teacher at Georgetown Middle School in Scott County, helps 7th grader Taryn Norman understand absolute values. Travis was named the 2005 Kentucky Teacher of the Year during ceremonies in Frankfort in November. (See Page 4 for story.)

## Mark your calendars to attend KTLC 2005 !

The hype about the Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference 2005 (KTLC) is true! This annual three-day conference is the only event in Kentucky that showcases a comprehensive collection of best practices and gives educators first-hand access to the work of outstanding educators that can help improve teaching and learning in their schools.

Numerous workshops and hundreds of sessions will fill the Kentucky International Convention Center March 3-5, 2005, in Louisville. Everyone — veteran and first-year teachers, ad-

ministrators, the techno-savvy educator and the techno-novice, content area teachers and library media specialists — will find something of professional interest.

The event begins on Thursday, March 3, with ticketed workshops. Separate registration fees are required for the three-hour workshops that cover a wide-range of current education topics. Michele Sloan, an educational specialist with ESCORT, a national resource center for improving educational opportunities for migrant chil-

See MARK on Page 10

## Schools gather data to improve learning

By Faun S. Fishback  
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Matt Thompson, principal at Deep Springs Elementary, is a recent convert to using handheld technology in his work. After a little training and a little practice, he is using a compact, hand-size computer to gather data about classroom instruction at the Fayette County school.

The device is a tool Kentucky administrators can use for whole school improvement. It is not designed to be used as part of an individual evaluation. "The device enables me to quickly and accurately take objective data (from a number of classrooms) which our school uses to ask questions leading to school improvement," Thompson said.

The handheld device Thompson uses is small. However, it packs a wallop, storing an enormous amount of information about what teachers are doing in their classrooms.

Thompson uses a specially designed computer program, "The Walkthrough,"

to quickly record what is going on in classrooms, the types of learning activities he sees, how students are working and learning, and how the lessons are prepared. This information — gathered multiple times for every teacher — will guide the faculty's work to improve teaching and learning at Deep Springs Elementary.

After Thompson gathers information on his handheld device, he transfers the data to his desktop computer. He then can analyze data for groups of teachers or the whole faculty. He also can chart strengths and weaknesses in instruction — vital information for school improvement work.

Thompson is one of more than 700 school and district administrators who have been trained to use handheld electronic devices and "The Walkthrough" to improve student learning. He also trains other principals and superintendents to use the device. Before he began recording data from the walkthroughs, Thompson said he met with the faculty and showed them what

See SCHOOLS on Page 9

## Board approves assistance for low-performing schools

By Cathy Lindsey  
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At its December meeting, the Kentucky Board of Education approved the criteria for dissemination of Commonwealth School Improvement Funds (CSIF), reviewed information updating content and student performance standards, continued discussions about Kentucky's writing assessment and heard presentations on a number of other items.

The CSIF was established in fall 2000 to support schools labeled in assistance as a result of low performance on state assessments. The funds help schools pursue new and innovative strategies to meet the educational needs of their students and to raise the school's performance level. These funds may be used for professional development, hiring consultants, implementing supplemental reading programs, purchasing technology and more.

In 2002, the Kentucky General Assembly mandated that CSIF grants during the 2002-2004 testing cycle be used solely for reducing achievement

gaps in schools that did not meet their goals under the state accountability system. Therefore, funds were disseminated using a formula based on the severity of achievement gaps in reading and mathematics and the Average Daily

See BOARD on Page 10

### What's Inside

Teachers voice feelings about writing assessments .....	3
New opportunities, services for students with sensory loss .....	4
Teaching core content through Kentucky traditions .....	5
Read & Discuss .....	6
Donna Carrier earns a 'star' for teaching excellence .....	8
Leadership Letter .....	11
Scholarships help schools grow their own teachers .....	12



# Bulletin Board



Photo by Rick McComb

## Events

### Cleanup Week

Commonwealth Cleanup Week is set for March 20-26, 2005. Kentuckians are urged to help “spring clean” the state during the weeklong event. Students in grades 1-8 may enter an environmental education contest. Grades 1-2 participate in a poster contest, and grades 3-5 and 6-8 create a multimedia public awareness campaign as part of a classroom project. Winning entries from the schools must be submitted to the local county extension agent by Feb. 4, 2005. Lesson plans for teachers may be downloaded from the Internet.

[www.waste.ky.gov/ccw](http://www.waste.ky.gov/ccw)

### Louisville Orchestra programs

The Louisville Orchestra announces these upcoming concerts available for school groups:

“America’s Land and People,” at the Kentucky Center, Whitney Hall on Jan. 19, 21, and 27, 2005, at noon. This Making Music series concert, conducted by Maestro Robert Franz, integrates themes of geography and music, and is appropriate for grades 3-6.

“Humanities 102: Art as a Reflection of Society,” at the Kentucky Center, Whitney Hall on Jan. 28, 2005, at 10:30 a.m. The concert, suitable for grades 6-12, highlights characteristics of music, art and architecture in their social and historical contexts.

Contact: Box office for group rates and teacher materials at (502) 585-9403

[www.louisvilleorchestra.org](http://www.louisvilleorchestra.org)

### Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day

Feb. 24, 2005, is a day set aside to encourage girls to consider careers in engineering. This is the centerpiece of National Engineers Week, Feb. 20-26.

Looking for a great project-based learning opportunity? The University of Kentucky’s College of Engineering sponsors its Engineers Day Open House on Feb. 26. Several contests for students include: egg drop, basketball catapult, Pringle mailing, Rube Goldberg and many more.

[www.engr.uky.edu/eday/2005/index.html](http://www.engr.uky.edu/eday/2005/index.html)

[www.eweek.org](http://www.eweek.org)

### American West exhibition

The Speed Art Museum in Louisville will host the “Capturing Western Legends: Russell and Remington’s Canadian Frontier” exhibit Feb. 12 through March 8, 2005. The exhibition includes 98 paintings, drawings and sculptures by two famous artists of the American West, Charles Russell and Frederic Remington. Teaching guides, lesson plans, etc., are available for teachers to download.

[www.speedmuseum.org](http://www.speedmuseum.org)

### Stage One

Stage One, located in Louisville, has these upcoming productions appropriate for field trips:

“Miss Nelson is Missing” is based on the book by James Marshall. Performances are Jan. 10 through March 25, 2005. Suitable for grades P-4.

“Come Sing, Jimmy Jo,” based on the book by Katherine Paterson, will be presented Jan. 24 through March 25, 2005. Suitable for grades 5-12.

“Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” is a participation play by Gail Fairbank-Roch. It will be performed Feb. 7 through March 25, 2005. Suitable for grades PreK-3.

All productions are at 10 a.m. and noon at the Kentucky Center, Bomhard Theater.

Contact: Box office for group rates for field trips and workshops at (502) 562-0161

[www.stageone.org](http://www.stageone.org)

### Ag Day poster and essay contest

Students in grades 1-8 may participate in the Kentucky Department of Agriculture’s annual Ag Day poster and essay contest. Winners for each grade will receive a \$100 savings bond. The theme for this year’s contest is “Kentucky Farmland, Preserving Our Past and Protecting Our Future.” Entries must be postmarked by Feb. 25, 2005.

Contact: Teresa Prather, (502) 564-6676, [teresa.prather@ky.gov](mailto:teresa.prather@ky.gov)

[www.kyagr.com/enviro\\_out/education/programs/postercontest/Winners.htm](http://www.kyagr.com/enviro_out/education/programs/postercontest/Winners.htm)

### Summer study in England

Teachers can apply for scholarships to study this summer in England from The English-Speaking Union Kentucky Branch. Deadline to apply for the scholarship is Jan. 18, 2005.

[www.esuky.org](http://www.esuky.org)

### Thoroughbred Center production

The next production at The Thoroughbred Center in Lexington will be “Amelia Bedelia Goes Camping” on Feb. 17 and 18, 2005, at 10 a.m. and noon. Amelia Bedelia goes camping for the first time and catches a fish...with her bare hands. This production also includes audience participation, a sing-along and much more. Teachers can download study guides from the center’s Web site.

Contact: Box office at (859) 293-1853

[www.thethoroughbredcenter.com/theatre/schedule.asp](http://www.thethoroughbredcenter.com/theatre/schedule.asp)

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## Resources

### Teacher tax deduction extended for classroom expenses

Recent federal tax legislation signed into law includes an extension of the “above-the-line” tax deduction for teachers for the first \$250 “out-of-pocket” spent on instructional materials and classroom supplies. The legislation, first passed in 2002, had expired at year’s end. Remember to keep receipts for classroom materials purchased during the 2004 calendar year.

### Common Cents

Common Cents is a financial literacy program designed for P-12 students to learn the basic principles of financial responsibility and long-term money management.

For this and other free educational programs from State Farm Insurance, visit [www.statefarm.com/educate/kits.htm](http://www.statefarm.com/educate/kits.htm).



# Commissioner's Comments

## Teachers have strong feelings about improving writing assessments

By Gene Wilhoit  
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I am never disappointed when I ask Kentucky teachers for help in improving our public education system! I know you can be depended on to give an informed opinion on what you know to be true for your school and your situation.

And, my recent request for your advice about Kentucky's writing portfolio and on-demand assessments is an example of that well-placed trust. From Nov. 15-29, more than 8,700 teachers, administrators, and district-level and postsecondary educators responded to my invitation to participate in an informal online survey about writing assessment issues.

The input is proving extremely valuable to the Kentucky Board of Education in its discussions on enhancing and updating the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS). As I reported to you earlier this school year, the board is reviewing CATS before preparing specifications for a new five-year testing contract that will take effect in 2006.

The board is thoroughly examining many areas of concern that teachers, principals, lawmakers and other education stakeholders have voiced about Kentucky's testing system.

One of the most consistently discussed issues with CATS is the writing component, both the portfolio and on-demand questions.

This summer, the board directed the department to convene a focus group to study Kentucky's writing assessment and to use that input in making recommendations to the board. Some of those recommendations, made public at the board's November meeting, were included in the 16-question online survey about writing. Other questions came from concerns about the writing assessment expressed by other educators and stakeholders.

While there is no overwhelming consensus among the nearly 9,000 people answering the survey, the answers have given the board volumes of information to help inform their decisions. This information, provided by those who regularly work with writing in our schools, provides the board with an opportunity to hear clearly what educators on all sides of the issues want them to know.

This is not a scientific survey. However, I feel confident that we have heard from classroom practitioners who have worked with the writing assessment the majority of their professional careers. Three-fourths of those answering the survey have been in the classroom 15 years or less, which means many have been involved in developing student writers

to meet the requirements of the portfolio and on-demand assessments. Kentucky has included the portfolio and on-demand questions as part of the state assessment for the past 12 years.

Although writing is currently assessed in 4th, 7th and 12th grades, we most often hear concerns about the 4th-grade writing portfolio. More primary and elementary teachers responded to the survey than teachers at other levels.

Slightly more than 70 percent of the educators responding to the survey said they favor adding a multiple-choice component to the current assessment. This component would be an additional method for assessing writing conventions, such as sentence structure and word choice. Support for this change was consistent at all levels, elementary, middle and high school.

Slightly more than 55 percent of respondents said they do not favor expanding the on-demand writing assessment to include personal expressive and literary entries. There was support from 43.3 percent of the respondents to include the entries.

A proposal to move the writing assessments to different grade levels received 34.4 percent support for assessing portfolio writing in 4th grade/5th grade on-demand; 7th grade on-demand/8th grade portfolio; and 11th grade on-demand/12th grade portfolio. The next option to receive support — at 27.5 percent — would assess the portfolio at 4th grade/5th grade on-demand; 7th grade portfolio/8th grade on-demand; 11th grade portfolio/12th grade on-demand.

Respondents were closely divided on whether Kentucky should add an on-demand writing prompt at the 12th-grade level that would count toward the reading index and the writing index at the high school level. Slightly more than 55 percent said it should not be added, and 41.2 percent said it should.

When asked about scoring methods, 50.2 percent of the respondents preferred the current system where scoring occurs at the school level but scores are audited at the state level. Slightly more than 25 percent indicated they would prefer state-level scoring by the testing contractor and no school-level scoring. Nearly 20 percent would prefer regional-level scoring only.

Respondents overwhelmingly showed support — at 59.6 percent — for a combination of holistic scoring for content and analytical scoring for writing conventions. Nearly 23 percent prefer reporting holistic scores only, and 16.4 percent prefer reporting analytical scores only.

When asked if the accountability



Photo by Rick McComb

### *Hallway update*

Aaron Reed, a 7th grader at the Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB), talks about classwork with Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit during the commissioner's November visit to the school. The commissioner visited the KSB campus in Louisville and the Kentucky School for the Deaf in Danville to commend students, teachers and administrators on their accomplishments on the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System.

system's weighting structure for writing should shift across grade levels, 65.8 percent said the weighting should be consistent. Only 30 percent said the weighting should shift across grade levels.

Given several models that add more performance levels for writing assessments, 38.8 percent of the respondents showed support for the model that provides for 10 levels: novice non-performance, novice and high novice; low apprentice, apprentice and high apprentice; low proficient, proficient and high proficient; and distinguished.

The survey also allowed respondents the opportunity to comment on proposed portfolio configurations at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Open-ended questions addressed strengthening the state's Code of Ethics for writing assessments and making changes to professional development opportunities

in writing.

The wide variety of opinions expressed in answers to these questions fills more than 2,000 legal-sized pages. Each member of the state board received an electronic copy of every single response along with the raw survey data in advance of their Dec. 8 and 9 meeting.

It is invaluable for the board to hear from every public school educator in Kentucky who is willing to comment on education issues before making final decisions on these important assessment issues. It has been important in the past — and remains so — that education stakeholders know they have been heard before the board makes assessment and accountability policies.

Look for more opportunities to provide suggestions and ideas to the board as we move forward.

To comment on this topic, send e-mail to the commissioner at gwilhoit@kde.state.ky.us.



# New opportunities, services for students with sensory loss

Students with sensory loss in Kentucky are beginning to notice changes in their services and programs because of a five-year Implementation Plan adopted in August by the Kentucky Board of Education. The plan, based on nearly three years of research and information gathering, is starting to improve and expand services in Kentucky public schools for students with visual and hearing losses or dual sensory loss.

The multi-faceted plan maintains quality, center-based services at the Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB) and the Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD) while providing more support to local school districts through expanded outreach services. As a result of the plan, coordination between the Kentucky Department of Education and other public and private agencies serving these students will increase.

The KSB campus in Louisville and the KSD campus in Danville will continue to offer instructional and related services to students identified through the Admissions and Release Committees as needing services at these schools.

Both schools will implement research-based literacy programs that have proven highly effective for students who are blind/visually impaired, deaf/hard of hearing and deaf/blind. Assessment coordinators for each school will help staff address any testing issues that are unique to these student populations.

Students at the two schools will benefit from expanded inclusion opportunities and access to all course offerings, includ-

ing after-school practical living and independent living skills development. Both schools will expand short-course offerings that provide sensory-specific services to students who come to their campuses for short periods of time. In addition, more on-campus summer experiences will be available.

A more uniform referral system as part of the First Steps program will ensure early identification of blind/visually impaired, deaf/hard of hearing and deaf/blind students. First Steps serves children from birth to three years of age who have developmental delays.

A minimum of 11 early childhood centers will be piloted to provide all services needed by preschool students — regardless of disability — in the regular classroom. These centers will be based on the Jessamine County Early Learning Village service delivery model.

One outreach staff person from each school will work with each of the 11 special education cooperatives to develop a comprehensive on-going method of program assessment, needs determination and evaluation of services, as well as to provide technical assistance and support.

The Department of Education, KSB and KSD will increase professional development opportunities for teachers and other service providers who work with students with sensory loss. Family support services at both schools will be expanded and upgrades will be made to instructional resource and assistive technology lending libraries at each school.

In addition, more comprehensive inter-



Photo by Rick McComb

David Carnes, a 6th grader at the Kentucky School for the Blind, reads a Braille format test on the Industrial Revolution in Britain during Karen Corbett's social studies class.

preter training at Eastern Kentucky University will be expanded to help meet the demands for interpreters for all modes of communication.

Teacher exchange programs will be established to enable mentoring, coaching and shadowing opportunities for service providers in local school districts. KSB will provide Braille transcription training to local and regional service providers.

For information about KSB services and programs, contact Kathy Jones, manager, Principal Jeanette Wicker or Cathy Johnson, outreach director, by calling (502) 897-1583 or by e-mail through the KETS global list.

To learn more about KSD services and programs, contact Bill Melton, campus

manager/interim principal, or Fran Hardin, outreach director, at (859) 239-7017 or by e-mail through the KETS global list.

Both schools are divisions within the Office of Special Instructional Services at the Kentucky Department of Education. Associate Commissioner Johnnie Grissom supervises a collaborative team, comprised of Barb Kibler, Larry Conner, Wilton McMillan, Bill Stearns and Barbara Bunuan, that is responsible for oversight of statewide services for students who are blind/visually impaired, deaf/hard of hearing and deaf/blind. Their office number is (502) 564-4970. Each team member's e-mail address is listed on the KETS global list.

## Billie Travis is named 2005 Kentucky Teacher of the Year

By Lisa Y. Gross  
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Billie Travis, a mathematics teacher at Scott County's Georgetown Middle School, was named the 2005 Kentucky Teacher of the Year during ceremonies in Frankfort in November. The annual awards program recognizes outstanding elementary, middle and high school teachers throughout the state. It is sponsored by Ashland Inc. and the Kentucky Department of Education.

Penny Roberts, a curriculum specialist and resource teacher at Muhlenberg County's Greenville Elementary, was named the 2005 Elementary School Teacher of the Year. Debbie Fowler, an English teacher at Hart County High, was named the 2005 High School Teacher of the Year.

The three join 17 other teachers from across the state honored with 2005 Ashland Inc. Teacher Achievement Awards. Travis received \$10,000 and a customized art-glass bowl from Ashland Inc. In addition, the Department of Education will provide a sabbatical or suitable alternative to Travis. She also will rep-



Travis



Fowler



Roberts

Photos by Rick McComb

national and state Middle School associations. She also is a regional board director for the Kentucky Middle School Association. She has been named to Who's Who Among America's Teachers and

is a past recipient of the Ashland Inc. Golden Apple Achievement Award.

Roberts has served two of her 18 years of teaching in her current position. She earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education and an endorsement in elementary music education from Western Kentucky University. She also has a master's degree in elementary school counseling, as well as 15 additional hours of music education.

She is a member of the Kentucky and Muhlenberg County Education associations and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. She is a member of the Kentucky Council of Teachers of Mathematics, served as primary vice

president for two years and received the council's Mathematics Education Service and Achievement Award. She is a member of the Western Kentucky Council of Teachers of Mathematics, where she has held several elected positions.

Fowler has been teaching for 10 years, serving four in her current position. She graduated from Campbellsville College with a bachelor's degree in business administration and holds an associate's degree in bank management from the University of Kentucky. She also has both a bachelor's and a master's degree in middle-grades education, with an emphasis in English and social studies, from Western Kentucky University.

She is a national- and state-level member of the Council of Teachers of English. In addition, she is a member of Hart County High School's school-based decision making council. She was named Hart County High School Teacher of the Year in 2004 and received the 2004 Campbellsville University Distinguished High School Educator award.



## Henderson County Schools make literacy a priority this school year

Henderson County educators and parents are working together to increase literacy among students in the district. As part of the literacy initiative, parents and guardians learned how to integrate reading into their regular family activities during a Parent Academy at the beginning of the school year.

Throughout the school year, Henderson County administrators, faculty and staff are encouraging adults to read with children on a daily basis. The slogan for the program is “The most important 20 minutes of your day ... Read with a child.”

More than 600 parents attended the academy to learn reading tips to use at home that support classroom literacy programs. The evening event was designed for parents of all students — preschool to high school.

Thirteen different sessions demonstrated a variety of ways to integrate reading into family activities, said Superintendent Thomas Richey. Families

attended sessions ranging from board games, sports and storytelling to science, college entrance exams and art.

“We attended a fabulous music session that taught us how to use ‘boomwhacker’ instruments to play a Ritchie Valens’ song after being inspired by the reading of a children’s version of his biography,” said Nichole Newland, who participated in several sessions with her daughters.

High school students, dressed as book characters, greeted Academy participants. Age-appropriate books and other prizes were given away.

The Parent Academy also featured an agency fair, designed to make families more aware of community resources. More than 30 local agencies — youth clubs, the public library, law enforcement agencies, Family Resource Centers and extended learning services — distributed information to the families.

All K-12 students are involved in classroom literacy activities. Primary teachers are focused

on this year’s kindergarten students — the district’s first full-day group — to make certain they are reading at or above grade level by the time they reach 3rd grade in 2007-2008.

The Henderson County literacy program is based on work in the Washington state Kennewick School District to identify and describe the attributes of an effective reading program. The research-based strategies used in those schools are documented in the book “The 90% Reading Goal” by Lynn Fielding, Nancy Kerr and Paul Rosier.

The Henderson County literacy program is part of a district-wide reading and mathematics plan to help students of all academic levels and grade levels reach their highest potential, said Superintendent Richey.

For more information about this Henderson County program, contact Superintendent Thomas Richey at (270) 831-5000, trichey@henderson.k12.ky.us or Ellen Redding, director of communications, at ereddin@henderson.k12.ky.us.



Photo by Rick McComb

### *Wings to fly*

Sixth grader Jana Johnson gets an up-close look at a monarch butterfly at Bowen Middle School in Owen County. Students in Tim Marcum and Donette Gaines’ science classes learned a life lesson when the season’s first frost killed the butterflies’ primary food source, milkweed planted by the students on school property.

## Learn to connect students to content through Kentucky traditions and crafts

An exciting way to teach creative writing, language arts, social studies, arts and humanities, vocational agriculture and practical living is to connect these areas of the curriculum to the real world of Kentucky’s traditions and economy. The Kentucky Arts Council is sponsoring The MARKET Professional Development Seminar from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Fair and Exposition Center in Louisville on March 4, 2005, to show teachers the many resources available in Kentucky to make those connections.

The seminar will be held in conjunction with Kentucky Crafted: The MARKET, a state-sponsored wholesale/retail event that attracts hundreds of artists and craftspeople from throughout the state. The seminar will give teachers the opportunity to:

- Interact with people who are earning their livings as writers, craftspeople, artists, musicians and farmers
- Learn hands-on arts and writing activities to take back to their classrooms
- Find out about grant resources that will enable them to bring artists and guest speakers to their schools

Gourd artists Chad Schott and CeCe Thomas will open the workshop with hands-on activities using gourds they have raised to make musical instruments and decorative items. The artists will discuss economic concepts like value-added agriculture and provide information on gourd art from diverse cultures and the prehistoric past.

Judy Sizemore, outreach coordinator for the council, will demonstrate how to connect portfolio-appropriate writing in genres from poetry to feature articles to the hands-on activity. Guest speakers will help participants learn the economic importance of specialty items such as buffalo meat, country cheese and salsa in Kentucky’s agricultural market.

Teachers also will learn how family farms have provided inspiration for successful artists and children’s authors. The afternoon session includes a field trip into The MARKET.

The MARKET features more than 300 exhibitors, including contemporary and traditional crafts producers, writers and publishers, two-dimensional artists, performers, folk artists and agricultural specialty producers. Kentucky artists are all participants in several arts council juried programs and rosters. Several statewide crafts- and arts-related organizations will have informational booths.

The seminar fee is \$50 per teacher. Register early, as space is limited. Registration will close Feb. 18, 2005, or when all spaces are filled. Teachers can register online at [www.kycraft.ky.gov/market/seminar.html](http://www.kycraft.ky.gov/market/seminar.html) or by calling Charla Reed at (888) 592-7238 (KY-CRAFT), Ext. 4815. For more information, contact Judy Sizemore, by phone at (606) 364-5831, by e-mail at [circuit@prtcnet.org](mailto:circuit@prtcnet.org) or by fax at (606) 364-2940.

## Grant programs help teachers give students the ‘gift of art’

Kentucky teachers in early childhood/preschool facilities and in alternative schools can bring artists, dancers, musicians, drama specialists and craftspeople into their classrooms for short-term residencies this school year. The Kentucky Arts Council will pay almost two-thirds of the cost through its grant program.

The residencies provide opportunities for staff and teachers to offer students different pathways of learning by introducing them to hands-on experiences with various art forms.

Students and teachers work with professional artists right in the classroom. Each artist is trained to help teachers integrate the arts into daily content lessons. The teacher and artist work together to design the residency to meet the needs of each school’s students and staff.

Teachers can work with a qualified artist from their own community or region. The Kentucky Arts Council also can help educators locate an artist from the Arts Education Artist Roster.

Who can apply?

Any director, teacher or staff person from a Kentucky nonprofit early childhood/preschool facility can apply for an ArtsStart! grant. Kindergarten classes can participate in activities provided 50 percent or more of the artist’s residency is with an early childhood program. Commu-

nity Early Childhood Councils can submit applications on behalf of for-profit centers serving low-income families.

Any director, teacher or staff person from a Kentucky alternative school or Kentucky youth correctional facility can apply for an Alternative Connections Program grant. This grant was formerly known as YCIP.

How to apply

Both grant programs offer an on-going deadline. Applications for either grant are due 30 days or more before the residency is to begin.

A draft grant proposal should be submitted to the arts council at least two weeks prior to the submission deadline. John Benjamin, program director, will consult with applicants and provide assistance.

The Kentucky Arts Council will notify successful applicants of award decisions within 20 days of receiving an application. “If your application is approved, assistance is provided to assure that your residency is all that it can be,” Benjamin said.

Information about the Arts in Education Grants can be found on the council’s Web site. Go to <http://arts council.ky.gov> and click on “Arts Education.”

John S. Benjamin, program director, can be reached toll free at (888) 833-2787, Ext. 4813, or by e-mail at [john.benjamin@ky.gov](mailto:john.benjamin@ky.gov).

# Read & Discuss

## ‘Extreme Learning’

Reviewed by Richard Hughes  
Hardin County Schools

Many times since I entered the field of education in 1968, I have been at excellent conferences and said to myself, “I wish all the teachers in my school or school district could be here.” Upon completing Keen Babbage’s most recent book, “Extreme Learning”—his sequel to “Extreme Teaching”—a similar thought came to me. All professional educators — but particularly practicing classroom teachers — could benefit from reading this interesting, relevant and practical book. Truly it is one of those books that will inform our practice!

Babbage is a credible author of a book on teaching. He is an assistant principal at Bryan Station Middle School (Fayette County) where for several years he has requested to teach one class each day. This has provided him an avenue to demonstrate and practice his “approach to use the whole-some knowledge, interests and talents of the students to create learning activities that connect what they know with what they need to know.”

When he taught economics, for example, he took the position that, “A textbook was not needed when the knowledge, talents and interests of the students provided a sufficient basis for further learning.” Yet, he acknowledges that textbooks are a must for some classes.

He contends that extreme teaching does not cover material; rather it uncovers knowledge, wisdom, mystery, understanding, analysis, insight, perception, thinking, curiosity, imagination, commitment and material. And, when completely and correctly implemented, extreme teaching can cause extreme learning, he says.

Babbage makes numerous contrasts between teaching to cover material and teaching to cause extreme learning. One example of extreme learning is seen in the time, effort and energy — two- or three-a-day practices — that we have come to expect from marching bands and athletic teams because directors and coaches expect perfection. They expect extreme learning.

Babbage says extreme learning connects wholesome prior knowledge with new knowledge. It connects wholesome talents of students with subjects at school, connects wholesome interests of students with the curriculum at school, and connects school life and real life by making school real.

Babbage reminds us that athletic achievement in our schools is so substan-

tial that education reform efforts rarely pay much, if any, attention to athletics. There is no need for “No Athlete Left Behind” legislation!

Students in such programs, he says, are taught, inspired, led, coached, corrected, disciplined, rewarded and challenged by people who set the standard of extreme learning as the only acceptable result. Coaches and directors have found, created, borrowed, shared, invented or researched the ways to make extreme learning happen.

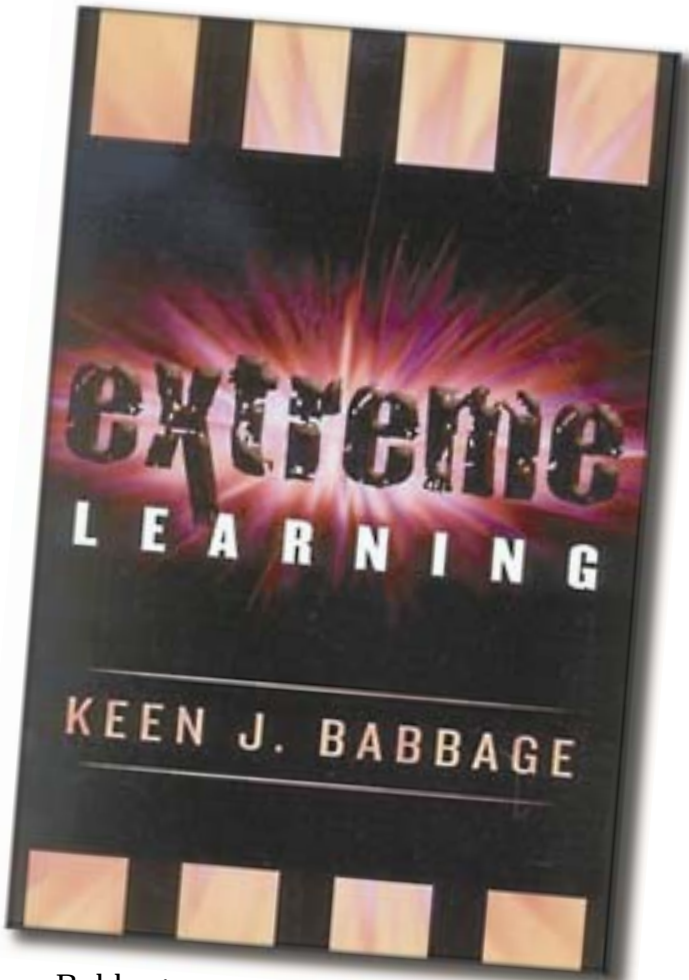
Babbage contends that we never question the standard of causing extreme learning and of getting extreme achievement in extracurricular activities at school. Similarly, we should not question the standard of causing extreme learning and of getting extreme academic achievement in classrooms.

Babbage says extreme learning dictates that if all a school does with students in the classrooms is cover material, then only a tiny portion of the totality of knowledge, discovery, wonder, exploration, creativity, analysis, imagination, application and brainpower of the teacher and the students will be used. Extreme learning on the other hand is infinite because the depth, width, height, length, quality and quantity of what teacher and students can do also are infinite.

According to Babbage, material is not covered in the extreme learning classroom. Material is uncovered as it is explored, analyzed and questioned; improved, applied and debated; connected with real life; connected with prior knowledge, interests or talents; and truly understood with depth, meaning, purpose and fascination. The extreme learning classroom continually renews itself, he says.

Babbage gives teachers pointers on establishing the extreme teaching and extreme learning mentality. He encourages readers to think of the characteris-

*When completely and correctly implemented, extreme teaching can cause extreme learning, according to Babbage.*



By Keen Babbage  
Paperback, 193 pages; Scarecrow Education; 2004;  
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A teacher and assistant principal at Bryan Station Middle School in Fayette County, author Keen Babbage will be a featured presenter at the 2005 Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference (KTLC) March 3-5 in Louisville. He will discuss this book and show participants during a ticketed three-hour workshop how they can develop an extreme learning classroom. See story on Page 1 for more information about KTLC or visit [www.kentuckytlc.org](http://www.kentuckytlc.org) for online registration.

tics of the best teachers they had when they were in school and emulate them:

- they challenge students and they challenge themselves
- they use a variety of teaching methods with emphasis on active involvement of students
- they are enthusiastic and encouraging
- they connect learning with students’ lives now, in their real worlds

Babbage says extreme learning takes students from what they know to what they need to know. He offers specific examples of extreme teaching that cause extreme learning in mathematics, language arts, social studies, world history, economics and interdisciplinary units.

Though he says he never plans for his classes to be fun, it is a by-product of fascination. As extreme learning is caused, students become fascinated and their learning — though demanding and still a lot of work — seems like fun.

The extreme learning classroom, according to Babbage, is organized, managed, productive, demanding, creative, interactive, interpersonal, disciplined, energetic, continuously evaluated, open to change, ready to use an unexpected opportunity, insistent on cooperation and results. It also is very fulfilling, rewarding and meaningful to students and teachers.

Extreme teaching that causes extreme learning can resolve the complaints of students that school is boring and the concerns of teachers that many students do not work hard at school. Extreme learning fascinates students, and teaching becomes productive for teachers.

In Hardin County, we are proud to have had Keen Babbage in our district on at least three occasions to present his innovative and practical ideas. He has informed our practice!

(Richard Hughes is superintendent of Hardin County Schools.)

## Have something to read and discuss?

Have you read a book or article you’d like to review for *Kentucky Teacher*? What about new software you’ve found helpful in your classroom or a Web site that provides good resources for teaching and learning?

Share your discoveries with teachers throughout the state by submitting a review about what you like — or don’t like — about the publication or resource. For submission guidelines, contact [kyteacher@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:kyteacher@kde.state.ky.us).



# Kah shares Japanese education experiences with Oldham County students and other teachers

By Joy Barr  
jbarr@kde.state.ky.us

Creating an international perspective for students at Oldham County High is one of mathematics teacher Michael Kah's goals — especially after his recent trip to Japan. The experience is giving Kah the opportunity to use his content area specialty to help his students understand the differences and similarities of other countries and their people.

Kah is preparing a unit of study for his Algebra classes that deals with the population density, limited land and associated issues in Japan as compared to the United States.

Kah says he has a lot to share with his students and fellow teachers since spending two weeks in Japan with 49 teachers from 10 different states. The study tour allowed the teachers to observe education and culture in the Far East as part of the Toyota International Teacher Program.

This fully funded professional development program is sponsored by Toyota Motor Sales, and led by the International Institute of Education (IIE). Shannon Murphy and Jama Vogt of Jefferson County, Sarah Raikes of Washington County and Jason Smith, Daviess County, were the other Kentucky high school teachers on the study tour.

"This experience has given Michael a greater appreciation for the American system of education. There is evidence of much greater pressure felt by the students in Japan and the social system within the school system," said Principal David Weedman.

Education differences

Indeed, the education system in Japan is typically quite different from that of the United States. In Japan, education is compulsory through the 9th grade. After that, senior high school becomes very competitive.

Japanese society places a heavy emphasis on the schools students attend, Kah said. There is much competition to attend prestigious schools. As a result, many young students attend juku (cram school) after regular school in the afternoons, evenings, Saturdays and holidays to prepare for entrance exams to these highly academic schools.

During the trip, Kah spent several hours at two different schools in Tokyo, a high school and an elementary school. He said he ob-



Photos by Rick McComb

Michael Kah, Oldham County High mathematics teacher, shows students formulas that will help them create graphs and charts from data research on a variety of topics comparing life in Japan and the United States.

served many teachers "lecturing," using blackboards and having little to no student interaction.

In the mathematics classes, he understood the lessons due to the universal nature of the mathematics language. "I am a high school teacher, but I recognized the geometry that the 5th graders were being taught," said Kah.

"I believe Japanese students are taught more advanced concepts at an earlier age than our students are. There also seems to be less interaction between the teachers and students," said Kah.

Learning English as a second language is important to the Japanese, and the students learn to speak and write English very well. They spend much time practicing their writing skills, he said.

Japanese schools are very neat and uncluttered. One interesting feature of the classrooms was that students cleaned the school at the end of the day, he added.



Oldham County High seniors Felecia Cook, left, and Blaire Estes present data to other members of Michael Kah's mathematics class as part of a unit Kah developed after completing a study tour of Japan last summer.

The Japanese believe schools should teach not only academic skills but good character traits as well. Students are taught respect for others as well as one's self.

The students walk or ride their

bikes to school. There are no school buses, and students do not drive. Before entering the school, the students change out of their shoes into slippers, Kah said.

A learning experience

"I learned a great deal about Japanese history, culture, environment, education, technology and industry," said Kah. "More importantly, I learned how each of these areas is intertwined and how each subject affects the others. For example, Japanese history had some long periods of isolation. When Japan was opened to the west in the late 1800s, they began a long period of catching up to the rest of the world. This is evident in their approach to the environment, for one thing. You can't compare a

subject like education without understanding the other aspects of a country."

Kah said the experience of the study tour "was amazing." The teachers spent two days in Tor-

rance, Calif., getting acquainted with the other teachers and program staff. "We were taught the basics of Japanese etiquette," he added.

The group spent five days in Tokyo. They toured the Edo Museum, had a briefing at the U.S. Embassy and heard lectures about the country and its culture. Kah then went to Kyoto where he stayed in Machiyas, which are traditional Japanese town houses. While touring, the teachers participated in traditional dance, Noh dramas, martial arts, tea ceremonies, calligraphy and even flower arranging.

When asked about his most memorable experience, Kah shared this story. "At breakfast in Tokyo, an older Japanese gentleman and his wife approached our group and began a conversation. We described our reason for being in Japan, and they told about their profession and hometown. Suddenly the man broke into tears as he told about being trained to be a kamikaze pilot near the end of World War II, but the war ended before he could join his comrades. Later, as they left, the gentleman said, 'I just wanted you to know how important your job is. Without the teachers I had as a youth, I would not be successful today. Thank you.'

"This was a remarkable experience and a great opportunity to get to know an outstanding group of educators. I am very appreciative of Toyota's efforts to support this program and encourage teachers to apply," said Kah.

Contact: Michael Kah at Oldham County High, (502) 222-9461, MKah@oldham.k12.ky.us

*Japan  
may be an  
application  
away!*

For more information about the Toyota International Teacher Program, call Joshua Beatty at the International Institute of Education toll-free (877) 832-2457, or send e-mail to [jbeatty@iie.org](mailto:jbeatty@iie.org). Applications can be downloaded and completed online by Jan. 10, 2005, at [www.iie.org/programs/toyota](http://www.iie.org/programs/toyota) for the upcoming tour.



# Donna Carrier earns a ‘star’ for teaching excellence

By Joy Barr  
jbarr@kde.state.ky.us

Oakland Elementary’s mission — visible throughout the small Warren County School — is to provide a safe, caring environment that will enable all students to reach their highest level of potential. That vision is exemplified in 5th-grade teacher Donna Carrier, who has been instrumental in helping the school increase its test scores, according to Principal Michael Taylor.

To honor Carrier’s commitment to education, Taylor nominated her for the American Star of Teaching Award, which was presented for the first time this year by the U. S. Department of Education under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Carrier is the only Kentucky teacher to receive the honor.

The American Stars of Teaching, according to the federal education department, are teachers, who, regardless of the challenges faced, are improving student achievement across the nation and, therefore, proving false the myth of “unteachable” students.

“Donna Carrier has high expectations for all of her students, and every day for her is not just a day of work, it is an opportunity,” said Taylor. “She should be commended for her hard work and achievement in a profession that is so vital in shaping the minds of tomorrow.”

Oakland Elementary is a progressive school with steadily increasing test scores. Despite many obstacles, the school has made great strides and has an accountability index of 88.4 on the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS).

Among the obstacles Oakland Elementary has overcome are a high migrant population and an influx of non-native English speaking students. More than 60 percent of the school’s 250 students qualify for the free-and-reduced-price lunch program. Despite this, the school has met Adequate Yearly Progress for the 2003-2004 school year.

Part of the school’s academic success is attributed to Carrier’s use of the “History Alive!” program, which focuses on literacy and social studies through group work. The program’s effects can be seen in the school’s increase in social studies scores — from an index of 58.5 in 1999 to 103.7 in 2004.

The program’s effects have also been seen in the way Carrier’s students have responded to her social studies instruction. “Social studies is great because you learn about what happened in the past. And you learn about things that might happen in the future. Mrs. Carrier is a great teacher and makes learning fun,” said 5th grader, C.J. Alvey, who especially loves current events.

The History Alive! curriculum encourages Carrier’s social studies students to work in small groups with hands-on exploratory activities.



Photo by Rick McComb

Donna Carrier, Kentucky’s recipient of the American Star of Teaching award, helps 5th grader Vanessa Navarrete design a flag during social studies class at Oakland Elementary in Warren County.

“Students retain history information so much better using this curriculum. For example, students can read about ships in a textbook and listen to the teacher’s instruction, but History Alive! offers hands-on activities — and students might even build a ship,” said Carrier.

Molly Greer, a 5th-grade student, said social studies is her favorite subject. “We get to do lots of activities and 3-D projects,” said Molly. “I think Mrs. Carrier is very creative and very nice.”

And, Chris Duncan, another student, says it is fun learning new things by doing activities. “I like being able to move around in the classroom and working with others,” said Chris.

The History Alive! curriculum, available through the Teacher’s Curriculum Institute, is based on three main concepts:

- Students have different learning styles
- Cooperative interaction increases learning and improves social skills
- All students can learn

History Alive! is a good tool to use in teaching core content. All subject areas — mathematics, art, music, science — can be covered with the social studies program.

Carrier said she started teaching with a focused and heartfelt goal: to educate children and watch them grow. “Teaching is not an easy job when done right,” said Carrier. “The quality of your life and your

students’ must increase.” She prides herself on enthusiasm and maintaining an excellent rapport with her students.

Brooke Knight, a team teacher at Oakland, did her student teaching with Carrier. “She is an inspiration to other teachers. Her enthusiasm for students and other teachers is limitless.”


High expectations are part of the culture at Oakland Elementary. A few years ago, the school implemented a program to change the overall climate at the school called Champs. The program — which is also used by other Kentucky schools — is a focused effort by the faculty to decrease discipline problems and increase the amount of time for teachers to teach.

The Champs program focuses on curriculum rather than discipline. The

school has established routines and has the same expectations for all students. There is consistency among a very dedicated staff. “The program gave a very proactive and positive approach to classroom management,” said Principal Taylor. “Our goal is to provide students assistance in developing to their fullest potential while satisfying physical and emotional needs.”

To learn more about the History Alive! curriculum, visit [www.teachtc.com](http://www.teachtc.com) on the Internet.

Contact Donna Carrier at [dcarrier@warren.k12.ky.us](mailto:dcarrier@warren.k12.ky.us) to learn more about her award-winning teaching practices, or Michael Taylor at [mtaylor@warren.k12.ky.us](mailto:mtaylor@warren.k12.ky.us) to learn more about Oakland Elementary’s academic programs. The school phone number is (270) 563-4719.



## Talk to Us!

Kentucky Teacher wants to know what you think, what you need from the Department of Education, what you want to see in future issues.

E-mail: [kyteacher@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:kyteacher@kde.state.ky.us)

Phone: (502) 564-3421 or (800) 533-5372 (toll free in Kentucky)

Fax: (502) 564-6470

Write: Kentucky Teacher  
1914 Capital Plaza Tower  
500 Mero St.  
Frankfort, KY 40601



# SCHOOLS from Page 1

the handheld device and walkthrough tool would do. They talked about each part of the walkthrough and came to “a common definition on what the classifications meant,” he said.

Right now, the faculty is developing a process to use the data “to ask ourselves the ‘tough’ questions,” Thompson said. “My goal is to use this data during faculty, committee and team meetings to lead into constructive dialogue with staff on improving instructional practices.”

After four months, the pocket PC is not only a technology device Thompson is using to improve student learning, it's become an invaluable professional tool for him, linking this busy administrator to his work while he's away from his office and his computer.

“It has made things much easier and time efficient,” he added. “Principals have so many more options simply by using the handheld for e-mail, calendar and other tasks. This walkthrough instrument is not one size fits all. However, it does allow for the collection of data for schools to begin dialogue and the improvement process.”

The more than 700 participating Kentucky public school administrators were trained to use the handheld devices through a program funded by a Gates Foundation grant to help educators use technology to improve student achievement. The number of educators trained through Phase II of the grant

include 44 superintendents, 16 assistant superintendents, 412 principals, 92 assistant principals, 42 Highly Skilled Educators, 25 district technology coordinators and 106 other school and district educators.

Other administrators have purchased their own handhelds and have attended the training, which is led by their peers as well as staff in the Kentucky Department of Education's Office of Leadership and School Improvement. Principals, assistant principals and district technology coordinators who serve as the leadership team for the project have conducted most of the training.

Administrators who own a handheld device have another opportunity to get training in using “The Walkthrough” during the 2005 Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference (KTLC) in Louisville. During a KTLC workshop on Friday, March 5, 2005, administrators can learn how to electronically collect data for school improvement discussions, conduct walkthroughs and use a handheld device for other administrative duties. (See story on Page 1 for more information about the conference workshops and registration fees.)

To find out more about using “The Walkthrough” on a handheld device, contact Pat Trotter at (502) 564-2116 or by e-mail on the KETS global list at ptrotter@kde.state.ky.us.



Photo by Tim S. Thornberry, Education Cabinet

STLP leads Warren Moore, left, Steven Wilmot, Ross Kelsch and Dustin Robinson listen to Aaron Kincer, their contact at the KETS Help Desk, as he explains how documentation of all help desk calls will be important to providing assistance to school administrators.

## H-E-L-P from STLP

By Faun S. Fishback  
ffishbac@kde.state.ky.us

With more than 700 school administrators using handheld computers in their daily work, there are bound to be glitches, problems with the gizmos and just plain frustration when a device won't power on. In anticipation of those problems, the Kentucky Department of Education took a page from that popular axiom, “ask someone under 20 years old for help with computers.”

The department created a technical team of more than 30 Student Technology Leadership Program (STLP) members in districts throughout the state, led by four high school students. As “Gates Grant leads,” Ross Kelsch, a junior at Augusta (Independent) School, Warren Lee Moore, a junior at Lee County High, Dustin Robinson, a freshman at Nicholas County High, and Steven Wilmot, a junior at North Laurel High, are at the center of this exciting venture.

Selected through an application process, all four lead students come from backgrounds of technology service in their schools and districts. Robinson, who serves as chief lead, may be familiar to many as the “go-to guy” for the statewide Read & Write Gold project, as well as helping with video editing and desktop publishing at his school.

Wilmot has worked in his school and district doing computer repair and troubleshooting problems. Moore also fields computer-related questions at his school, as well as helping develop Web pages and protect the school's computers from virus threats.

Kelsch has volunteered with a private school in his district for five years. He manages that school's computer network, including e-mail and several servers. He also is responsible for maintaining the school's records for Scholastic Reader and server programs.

These four young men have become

thoroughly familiar with the technology and software for the handhelds. They also use a handheld computer for organizing their own class assignments, personal computing needs like e-mail, and the occasional game.

“A couple of them are getting up to speed on programming so they can be an integral part of updating the software used (for classroom walkthroughs),” said Aaron Kincer, the main STLP contact on the KETS Help Desk, located in Frankfort.

The 30-member student team is the first line of assistance for superintendents and principals who have problems with their handheld devices and the walkthrough software. If a team member can't solve a problem, the administrator sends an e-mail request to the KETS Help Desk that Kincer staffs. He then refers the problem to one of the four STLP leads, who works directly with the administrator to get the device working properly again.

The STLP leads share information through a listserve with each other and with members of the student team about problems they've solved. They plan to create a Web site that will allow more information storage and sharing.

The STLP leads say they are excited about working with the Help Desk during their free time. They like using their technology skills and knowledge to help others. They also feel the experience of working with others to solve computer problems is an opportunity that will increase their expertise. All four have a lifelong interest in technology and feel it will be the focus — or at least part — of their postsecondary education.

Their advice to school administrators: Learn the basics of your computers, use them in all aspects of your work and call on the STLP team and the STLP leads if you need help!

The STLP leads will discuss their work with the Help Desk during the STLP Showcase at the 2005 Teaching and Learning Conference on March 4.



Photo by Rick McComb

Principal Matthew Thompson's daily classroom walkthroughs at Deep Springs Elementary are so routine that they do not interrupt the learning of students Erin McMurry, left, and Holli Rockvoan as he looks over student work and records information on his handheld computer.



# MARK from Page 1

dren, will show high school teachers how to make content more comprehensible to students with language barriers.

James Klotter, professor of history at Georgetown College and state historian of Kentucky, will provide new approaches to teaching Kentucky history.

Keen Babbage, assistant principal at Bryan Station Middle School in Fayette County, will discuss strategies from his latest book, “Extreme Learning” for teaching any content area. (See Page 6 for a review of the book.)

Lauretta Buchanan returns to KTLC as a presenter for a workshop on the Self-Motivational and Recreational Teaching Strategies (S.M.A.R.T.S.) Learning System, a program she created.

One-hour and two-hour sessions are held March 4 and 5. Featured session presenters include Tery Medina, Gary Howard and Mary-Dean Barringer. Medina, associate director for the Southeastern Equity Center in Florida, returns to KTLC for a session on equitable educational opportunities for language minority students and their families.

Howard, founder and president of REACH Centers for Multicultural Education, will conduct a session on diversity leadership. Barringer, national director of the Schools Attuned program, will lead two sessions on using a neurodevel-

opmental perspective to understand student-learning problems.

Who should attend?

KTLC is designed to provide quality professional development for Kentucky educators and administrators, as well as be informative for school council members, parents and other Kentuckians interested in education. Because many schools get

the most out of the conference by sending a team, a special registration package is offered to teams of five or more people

from one school.

When such a team registers, the conference fee for a principal or assistant principal will be waived. This is a \$100 savings.

Online professional development courses also are available to school teams — administrators, educators and council members— and individuals. Six courses offered by the Kentucky Virtual High School (KVHS) will begin with a three-hour orientation and supervised work session at the conference and continue online until April 24.

The fee is \$100 for each online course, in addition to conference registration. Participants in the online courses and conference attendees can receive professional development credit and Effective Instructional Leadership Act hours.

The Student Technology Leadership Program (STLP) Showcase also will attract students to the conference to see their peers’ cutting-edge school technology projects. STLP digital art projects from across the state will be featured in the conference’s CyberC@fe, and members of the Kentucky artists-in-residence program will perform throughout the event.

In addition, many professional and school-related organizations meet in conjunction with KTLC so their members can take advantage of the conference workshops and sessions.

Registration fees

Feb. 14 is the deadline for preregistration to ticketed workshops and the full conference. Preregistration for the full conference is \$100, a \$25 savings, and \$40 for students, a \$10 savings. Preregistration for one day of the conference (either Friday or Saturday) is \$60.

After Feb. 14, registration fees increase to \$125 for the full conference and \$75 for one-day registration. Student registration will be \$50 after that date.

Conference registration does not include admission to any of the ticketed workshops on March 3. The fee for most workshops, which are longer and more in-depth learning opportunities, is \$50 each. The KVHS online courses are \$100 each.

For complete conference information, go to [www.kentuckytlc.org](http://www.kentuckytlc.org). The Web site offers registration information, both online registration and a registration form that can be printed and mailed or faxed. Hotel reservations also can be made from the Web site.

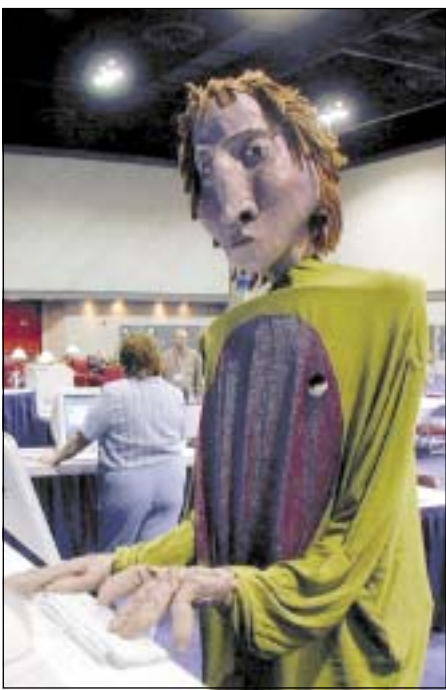


Photo by Rick McComb

A performer with Squallis Puppeteers takes the opportunity to surf the Web on a computer in the CyberC@fe during the 2004 Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference (KTLC) in Louisville. The 2005 conference again promises a wide range of activities, sessions, workshops and performing artists to engage the imagination and support educational discovery.

KTLC will feature an Exhibit Hall with more than 250 vendors. Each will display products and educational programs of interest to Kentucky educators. The Exhibit Hall will be open for two days of the conference: March 3 from noon to 6 p.m. and March 4 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

# BOARD from Page 1

Attendance (ADA) rate of \$25 per student.

While the board is not obligated to continue disseminating these funds for 2004-2006 based on the former criteria, the board decided to do so because the approach has been effective. Since 2000, the number of public schools in assistance has decreased from 141 to 48. Of the 130 schools in assistance during the past two testing cycles, 104 have remained out of assistance.

The board agreed that disseminating funds according to achievement gaps and ADA will help schools get to proficiency by helping them focus on their most important academic needs.

“Seven Steps Forward”

The Kentucky Department of Education staff and Commissioner Gene Wilhoit have discussed with the board what steps need to occur as the new assessment and accountability contract Request for Proposals is designed. The cornerstone of these “Seven Steps Forward” concerns work with the current content and student performance standards.

The board has asked department staff to prepare a schedule for upgrading all content standards. This process is not one of developing new standards. Rather

it is one of updating to ensure Kentucky’s standards are aligned with emerging national standards and are organized in a way that the essential knowledge and skills to be learned are clear.

While all areas of the core content are being addressed during this process, department staff highlighted reading and mathematics during its review at the December meeting. These content areas received particular attention due to the federal No Child Left Behind legislative emphasis and the on-going discussion of the need for better alignment at the secondary level with postsecondary and workplace expectations.

Department staff provided the board with a timeline for reviewing, updating and organizing the standards. This will allow schools to implement the clarified core content by August 2006 to prepare for spring 2007 testing.

During the past year, the board has focused on writing assessments and on specific issues related to the instructional time spent on portfolios, portfolio connections to P-16 transition and resolving differences in teacher-produced scores and audited scores.

The board reviewed results of an online survey of teachers, administrators

and postsecondary educators concerning possible changes to Kentucky’s writing assessment. These results, which mirrored the findings of a writing focus group convened by the department, showed no overwhelming consensus exists among educators about necessary changes.

The board did agree that Kentucky must have a writing assessment that sets high standards for students. The board said the state’s focus must remain on what good writing instruction should be.

Members of the National Technical Advisory Panel for Assessment and Accountability (NTAPAA) discussed with the board issues such as the number of pieces that would be valid at each level of the portfolio, student choice within portfolio pieces, the best way to assess writing conventions, the ramifications of changing the weights of portfolio and on-demand writing, and analytical versus holistic scoring.

The board will continue its discussions and review of possible changes to the writing assessment at its January meeting.

CATS Online

The board also heard an update on the

CATS Online High School Prototype. Directly tied to the “Seven Steps Forward,” online testing will provide immediate feedback that will allow teachers to deal more effectively with individual student accountability.

A CATS Online High School Prototype will be conducted for the Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT) in grade 10 reading and grade 11 social studies for the 2005 test administration. The prototype will include a sample of approximately 3,600 students per grade. It will serve as a pilot for the administration of the KCCT in online format for all students in the future.

All Kentucky high schools will be invited to participate. Participating schools will be selected based on certain criterion such as technical capacity and geographic location. Student scores from the online prototype will count toward school accountability calculations.

The next meeting of the Kentucky Board of Education will be Jan. 5, 2005, in Frankfort. More information about the board is available at [www.education.ky.gov](http://www.education.ky.gov). Click on “KDE Quicklinks” in the upper right-hand corner. Scroll down to “State Board of Education” and click.



# Leadership Letter

Compiled by Joy Barr  
jbarr@kde.state.ky.us

## NAESP convention

The National Association of Elementary and Secondary Principals will hold its 84th annual convention, April 15-19, 2005, in Baltimore, Md. Register online at <http://web.naesp.org/conv2005/regs.htm>.

## Improving nutrition and physical fitness

A new report by Action for Healthy Kids calls on schools to take action to address students' poor nutrition and physical inactivity. "Schools have the unique opportunity — even the responsibility — to teach and model healthful eating and physical activity, both in theory and in practice. Improving children's health likely improves school performance, and it may even help a school's bottom line. Therefore, schools have a vested interest in improving the nutrition and increasing the physical activity of their students," said David Satcher, former U.S. Surgeon General. Satcher, author of the report, "The Learning Connection: The Value of Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity in Our Schools," cites how schools may be losing critical state dollars when students are absent due to health problems caused by poor nutrition and physical inactivity.

Action for Healthy Kids recommends that schools consider implementing best practices for nutrition and physical activity throughout the school campus. To help improve students' health and readiness to learn, schools need to include daily physical activity, provide health and physical education, increase the availability of health-promoting foods and beverages, and offer more after-school programs that provide nutritious snacks, physical activity and nutrition education.

[www.actionforhealthykids.org/AFHK/specialreports/index.htm](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/AFHK/specialreports/index.htm)

## Proposals sought for Teacher Academies

The Kentucky Department of Education is accepting proposals for its 2005 Teacher Academies through Jan. 18, 2005. Proposals will be accepted from public and private postsecondary institutions, educational cooperatives, school districts, professional associations and organizations, and other state or local public or private educational centers or groups.

Teacher Academies provide intensive, long-term, content-focused professional development in the core content areas. The purpose of an academy is to improve teacher knowledge in a core content area and to enhance the ability to teach the content more effectively so that student

learning and performance will improve. Academies also are designed to foster learning communities and develop leadership capacity of participating teachers.

For more information about submitting a proposal, go to the department's Web site at [www.education.ky.gov](http://www.education.ky.gov) and click on the link to "Teacher Academy Proposals Sought" or contact Sheila Vice at (502) 564-9850 or by e-mail at [svice@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:svice@kde.state.ky.us).

## Schools must publish district report cards

The Kentucky General Assembly approved budget language during the 2004 legislative session that provided a one-year exemption from the statutory requirement to publish school district report cards in local newspapers. However, the General Assembly did not pass a state budget this year, and so the publishing requirement is still in place.

Accordingly, school districts must once again publish their District Report Cards in the newspaper with the largest paid circulation in the county no later than the second Sunday in February. This year, that date is Feb. 13, 2005.



Photo by Rick McComb

## Training to improve schools

Boyd County Middle School Principal Bill Boblett listens to a discussion about how to conduct scholastic audits and reviews during a training session this fall. More than 300 principals and teachers are working in Kentucky's lowest performing schools to evaluate each school's learning environment, efficiency and academic performance of students, and make recommendations for school improvement.

## Prichard Committee reports on teaching

"Quality Teaching Initiatives in Kentucky: A Status Report," released by the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, looks at a five-year history of teaching quality in Kentucky. The report focuses on four areas and makes recommendations in each area: compensation, teacher education and preparation, teacher recruitment and retention, and professional development. The report can be downloaded from the Internet.

[www.prichardcommittee.org/news/TeachingQualityRelease.htm](http://www.prichardcommittee.org/news/TeachingQualityRelease.htm)

## Leaders in Learning awards nominations

Cable in the Classroom's Leaders in Learning Awards honor policymakers, educators, community leaders and administrators who demonstrate vision, innovation, action and transformation in K-12 education, in schools and in other informal learning settings such as after-school programs. In addition to a three-day, all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., winners receive a \$3,000 prize and the chance to be part of a national community of innovators.

The online application/nomination process continues through January 2005.

[www.leadersinlearningawards.org](http://www.leadersinlearningawards.org)

## Inside Kentucky Schools

A Kentucky Department of Education production  
30 minutes of news and features  
about education in Kentucky

- Second and fourth Saturday of every month at 5 p.m. Eastern/4 p.m. Central on KET
- Second and fourth Sunday at 3 p.m. Eastern/2 p.m. Central on KET2

Please check TV listings for air times on local cable stations. For program information, visit [www.education.ky.gov](http://www.education.ky.gov) and click on "KDE QuickLinks" to find Inside Kentucky Schools.





Lori Wallin, right, and Beth Schaefer discuss plans for an upcoming lesson in their Cumberland Trace Elementary classroom. Wallin, an instructional aide, recently used a KIDS NOW Scholarship to complete an associate's degree in early childhood education and a bachelor's degree in general studies.

Photo by Rick McComb

By Dennis Angle  
Western Kentucky University

The way Lori Wallin tells it, marriage rescued her from a career of changing college majors 20 years ago.

"I had already changed my major three times by the time I was a sophomore," Wallin said. She quit college to marry Jim Wallin. In three short years, they had three children.

Lori was a stay-at-home mom for more than 11 years. She stayed involved in her children's education through PTA and school-based decision making (SBDM) projects.

In 1998, Jim suggested that perhaps Lori should get a job at the school and actually make money for all the time she spent there.

With their youngest child entering 3rd grade, Lori applied for a position at their school.

About that time, Beth Schaefer, who had returned to the classroom as preschool teacher at Cumberland Trace Elementary (Warren County), needed an instructional assistant. She began working with her principal to find a suitable candidate.

"We interviewed several, but I quickly chose Lori," Beth said. "Although she had no classroom experience, formal training or education in child development, I felt that having three children in elementary school would give her at least an idea of what young children might need."

As they prepared for the first

day of school, Lori was full of questions. "She was concerned with things like schedules, the location of materials and learning the names of the new students," Beth said.

Once school started, Lori had even more questions. And, they were becoming more and more complicated: Why do we eat family style? Why do we have learning centers? What are the children supposed to learn from this activity?

"She was quick to question my practices, but she was also quick to learn and to assist with problem solving and planning," Beth said.

Toward the end of that first year, Beth questioned Lori about her career goals. "Lori was working so hard and had learned so much, but she was being paid very little," Beth said. "I began to encourage Lori to pursue a degree in early childhood education."

For Lori, however, returning to college wasn't that easy. She and her husband were saving for their children's higher education. There was no pot of money for Lori to attend college.

Then in the summer of 2001, Beth called to say, "I found you a scholarship."

Kentucky's KIDS NOW Scholarships were created to provide nonrepayable tuition scholarships to child care workers wishing to pursue an associate's or a bachelor's degree in early childhood education. In July 2001,

the program expanded to include instructional assistants working in state-funded preschools.

After consulting with school district officials, Lori applied through the regional Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) Agency to become a part of the KIDS NOW Scholarship program. She worked with the professional development coordinator at the CCR&R to obtain a scholarship. Academic advisors at Western Kentucky University helped her plan for a degree in Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education.

"One of my first classes was Child Development. Our teacher, Janet Fugate, helped me understand why Beth did so much of what she did in our classroom," said Lori. "I began to understand the theory behind our practice, and I really began to understand that working with children was what I wanted to do the rest of my life."

While pursuing her degree,

Lori still worked full time in the classroom. What she learned, she could not wait to put into practice.

"I could see tremendous growth in her each semester," said Beth. "She began to recommend changes in our classroom. She often expressed her increasing understanding of the reasons for our actions. It was like watching a flower bud, then bloom."

In May 2004, Lori received her associate's degree in Interdisciplinary Early Child-

hood Education. Because of the coursework she completed before getting married, she also received a bachelor's degree in general studies.

Lori expects to complete the master's program in Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education at Western in 2005, about the time her oldest child enters college.

*(Reprinted from The Child Care Professional, October 2004, with permission from the Child Care Resource & Referral at WKU.)*

## Curious about KIDS NOW Scholarships?

If you want to learn more about the KIDS NOW Scholarship program and how it can help early childhood educators continue professional development, go to [www.kheaa.com/prog\\_ecds.html](http://www.kheaa.com/prog_ecds.html). Contact the Child Care Resource & Referral office listed for your region.



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